

## FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

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**Finding: There is no Cal Fire or Forest Service Helicopter stationed in the Basin .**

### **Background and Supporting Evidence:**

Helicopters are extremely expensive to purchase, maintain, and staff. Costs to staff a helicopter exceed \$1 million per year after the initial purchase cost of approximately \$3 million. In addition Cal Fire currently has helicopters within a reasonable flying time at Columbia and Auburn/Grass Valley. With 50 mph winds during the Angorra fire, even if one was available it would have been ineffective.

**Recommendation(s)** *Ensure that either the Auburn/Grass Valley or Columbia Helicopters are available as much as possible. Work with the USFS to ensure that one of their contract helicopters is available within a 30 minute flying time when predicted fire weather forecasts exceed a specified level.*

### ☐ **Impacts of Implementation:**

The only additional cost would relate to potential landing fees if the SLT airport is used, plus the potential cost of housing a crew in the area on a part time basis. Staffing would include a pilot, fire captain, and several firefighters. There are no existing regulations and/or laws that need to be changed.

Analysis of impacts on the following factors is OPTIONAL:

Would require cooperation between the USFS and the Cal Fire Units involved to ensure there is one helicopter available during high fire hazard conditions.